

The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn's Real Newspaper

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INCLUDING ALL EDITIONS

AWP/18 pages • Vol. 30, No. 20 • Saturday, May 19, 2007 • FREE

BATTLE OVER ARENA ... BAGELS

Business changes name

THE OPPONENTS OF ATLANTIC YARDS are so frustrated by Bruce Ratner and his high-priced pals that they're taking out their aggression on a lowly bagel store owner.

Just a few hours after bagel man Ravi Aggarwal put up a "Arena Bagels and Bialys" sign on his soon-to-open Fifth Avenue shop, opponents of the basketball arena inspired the name and made their feelings clear: they planned to protest outside Aggarwal's store if it remained "Arena Bagels."

Aggarwal, who took over the business from his father, said he would never relent on such bullying, but as more and more potential customers dropped by to express their concerns about buying their morning coffee and bagel at a place named "Arena."

"In the end, I had to change the name," said Aggarwal, "I can't do anything else against my neighborhood because I'm a neighborhood guy. These are my customers and I can't go against them."

So now it is, "Arena Bagels" hangs — a guy who had himself up from a dishwasher to a manager to, finally, the owner of bagel stores in Queens, Long Island and Brooklyn — is gunned

down in the war over Atlantic Yards.

It started innocently enough: Aggarwal told The Brooklyn Paper that he wanted to link his new shop to the basketball arena that is slated to rise just a block and a half up Fifth Avenue.

"For me, naming it 'Arena' was all about location," he said. "I just knew I wanted to come to Brooklyn with bagels, which are the best, by the way. I don't know anything about the Atlantic Yards project."

He quickly got education about the mega-project, and the negative passions it provokes in some people.

From the moment the sign went up this week, people started complaining — and some were openly hostile, he said.

"At first," he said, "No way, I'm not going to be part of this."

But that steadfast conviction didn't last long. Aggarwal said the sign would come down on Thursday — after this issue went to press. His other stores are named "Slim's Bagels," so he said he hopes that he'll name the Fifth Avenue store "Brooklyn Slim's."

See ARENA BAGELS on page 16

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See ARENA BAGELS on page 16



The Brooklyn Paper / AP Wirephoto

HOLE BAGEL: Arena Bagels at 55 Fifth Ave. was the first business near Atlantic Yards to take its name from Bruce Ratner's mega-development, but owner Ravi Aggarwal has decided to change the name due to threats of a boycott of the yet-to-be-opened store.



ON THE ARM: This design of the Williamsburg Savings Bank building is a popular Brooklyn tattoo.

Tattoo youse

Brooklyn icons getting some ink

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Paper

People love Brooklyn's brownstones, but one woman is now wearing her love on her sleeve — or, more accurately, under it, in the form of a brownstone tattoo.

Last week, Manuela Montemino became the first person to get what would be the first-ever brownstone tat, a six-inch black-ink rendering of the century-old Henry Street building she calls home.

The brownstone image — pedestals, cornices, wrought-iron fence and all — nestles on her right scapula, between a larger tattoo of a red rose and one of a ghostly angel (pictured on page 16).

"I got the tattoo for my mom, an angel for my grandmother. I needed something else," said Montemino, a Brooklyn Heights resident.

People have been inking their flesh with symbols of the Empire State Building, the brownstone has become an object of "tattoo significance," according to Mike McCabe, au-

thor of "New York City Tattoo: The Oral History of an Urban Art."

"New York City tattoos [are] a total grab bag of cross-cultural and patriotic references," he said. "They're the World Trade Center was very popular. The Katz's deli logo is popular, the Empire State building, the Staten Island Ferry. The brownstone is a new one."

Montemino said that her tattoo artist, originally inspired by a tattoo of her father, a building restorer who bought 273 Henry St., the year she was born, as well as the "old soul" of the fast-changing borough she grew up in.

"I love the way that brownstones are beautiful, full of history and character, like Brooklyn has been throughout my life," she said.

Montemino's rite of urban passage took place on a recent Friday at Brooklyn Tattoo, a popular ink shop on Atlantic Avenue near Hoyt Street.

The shop's owner, Adam Gould, said Montemino was the first customer who asked for a tattoo of a brownstone — but the hometown symbol has (thankfully) advanced, and the basic idea has remained the same: people want to put their passions on display.

And art is a tall and crassless, the red white and blue face of Old Glory or the Empire State Building, the brownstone has become an object of "tattoo significance," according to Mike McCabe, au-

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Say Fey!

Park Slope welcomed "30 Rock" creator and star Tina Fey to Seventh Avenue to film scenes for her forthcoming movie, "Baby Mama."

HARD CELLS

Plan could put condos at jail

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Paper

A tiny condo developer says he wants to build residential towers on each side of the Brooklyn House of Detention — a bold salvo in his bid to win redevelopment rights at the soon-to-reopen jail.

Local officials say the administration solicited bids to transform the House of Detention into a mixed-use penal facility.

Two towers — consisting of condos, office space, a hotel, and apartments — could be built along the Atlantic Avenue jail under the city plan. And the proximity of the inmates to the tenants isn't deterred developer Jed Walentas.

"It's a wise choice of real estate and I don't see why the jail is a huge issue," Walentas, son of DUMBO developer David Walentas, told The Brooklyn Paper this week. He said his company's proposal "a residential tower next to the jail."

Walentas added that "if the project is done right," apartments in the resulting "House of D" condos could attract the same wealthy crowd as the Concourse's 320-unit building, built by developer Two Trees Management.

Walentas made his bold pronouncement last Friday, one day after the city's Economic Development Corp. invited selected developers to submit plans for two 10- to 15-story commercial and/or residential towers that would sandwich the existing 11-story jail at the rapidly gentrifying corner of Atlantic Avenue and Smith Street.

The towers could be filled with offices, hotel rooms or apartments, according to the city's pitch. Walentas said that he would consider building only if it was guaranteed that he could do a residential development, which would likely be more profitable than the alternatives.

According to Walentas, the House of Detention complex would include a 22,000-square-foot underground parking garage for city workers and hundreds of new cells for the jail, which has been closed since 2003.

Diagrammatically, the towers would rise

See JAILHOUSES on page 5

Ridge heavyweight wants to be big loser

By Matthew Lysiak
The Brooklyn Paper

A larger-than-life local figure is about to lose his powerfully by a few hundred pounds.

Bay Ridge resident Will Millender, 26, is embarking on a 10-week, 550-mile walk from Boston to Washington as part of a new reality show in which expert contestants lose weight to win cash.

"I can't tell you much about it now, but I am hoping the more you see me, the more you will realize it's a good idea," Millender said last Thursday, the day before he left to begin filming of ABC's six-episode series, "Fat March," which is based on the British reality show, "The Fat to Walk."

It is the latest variation among TV weight-loss shows, but unlike "The Biggest Loser" and "Celebrity Fit Club," the goal of the "Fat March" is to become one big band of brothers.

But they stay together by the end of the walk, they eat the same simple pot — but a little more exercise drops a pound, or is voted out for slowing the others down, the pot is reduced by \$100,000.

The Bay Ridge resident is looking for more than big money and fame, though. He said Millender (right) is looking to change his life.

"I know I need to do something about my weight," said Millender, who tip-toed his way through the competition. "You just don't see a lot of older people my size walking around, and it doesn't take a genius to figure out why."

The show, which will be broadcast in June, has already taken on Millender. During a pre-show taping, he



fainted and was sent to the hospital. After several tests, he was diagnosed with a heart condition. Millender, a Brooklyn Community College student, was convinced to keep going by the show's physical trainers, who are also the hosts. (Turns out, it was just a bad case of sugar shock after Millender was checked out, he was cleared to continue.)

Surviving "Fat March" isn't the first step to changing life, only the latest. For example, Millender's girlfriend of eight years Erin O'Keefe (right) is looking to change his life.

"Over the past two years he's gone from working retail with me to going to work with me, making the Dean's List," said O'Keefe. "It has been a tremendous life-changing few years for him."

True, mutations, and even a slice of celebrity are nothing new for Millender, who has battled his weight for

several years, and whose image can still serve as a reminder of the days of the notorious Ridge for his first post-shaving at the Fifth Avenue pizza-eating contest last June at Rocca's Pizzeria (Millender was cheered to victory by his mother, who is indeed a legend, a once-legendarily now slimmed-down, caterer, Borough President Markowitz).

He ate 10 slices in the regulation 12 minutes. The performance made him legend.

"We had about 2,000 people cheering on," said contest host Joseph Loccisano. "If he walks as well as he eats pizza, he will walk the world."

O'Keefe says that Millender's march is bigger than any man, and could set a healthy example for millions.

"This is a walk in a lifetime experience. It's going to get healthy and win cash," said O'Keefe.

Filthy puppets on stage at St. Ann's

By Chris Varnus
The Brooklyn Paper

They drink, smoke, they curse. One, a Puerto Rican, only shuns underwear. Another, a sphere-headed butler named Pitter Pat, admits to frequenting prostitutes.

Now here are some rock puppets who are ready for prime time!

Began May 30 at St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., at Dock Street, the show's DUMBO Lab artists and their collaborators meet weekly over nine months to develop projects. Each spring, St. Ann's Warehouse presents a mini-festival of New Puppet Theater from the Lab.

So what is it about puppets? "You sort of forget they're objects," Schlesinger said. "It's really all about how they're real people."

Like the DUMBO Lab co-directors, Deb Hurlin and David Neumann, Lab artists and their col-

leagues are the real stars, come with live humans — and a unique approach to the puppet interview. With Pitter Pat, who's written a tell-all memoir entitled "Out of the Soak," she engaged in literary conversation.

With others, she chose more provocative subjects — puppet discrimination, a debate on Spanish Harlem's genetics, a discussion with the commando abuela and a discussion of the Iraq war with an ancient Greek warrior.

"There really is a human behind every puppet," she said. "It's the person who made it or the person around talking to states and voices."

Other works in the series include "Dear Mme.," a musical play set to music performed by the Karmos Quartet; "Lolita," an evening-long exploration of the life of the Spanish Pintor who appears in the puppet plays of Federico Garcia Lorca and as he is imagined offstage; and "The Jester of Tonga," an eccentric travesty about the last true monarchy in the world.

"Lolapalooza" will run from May 30 through June 3 at St. Ann's Warehouse (38 Water St., at Dock Street). Tickets are \$20. For information, call (718) 254-8779 or visit www.stannswarehouse.org.

Pitter Pat is one of seven puppets interviewed by Toni Schlesinger (left) at St. Ann's Warehouse.

JUDGE PHILLIPS FREED!

The Brooklyn Paper

Six years after he was declared mentally incompetent under murky circumstances, and two years after he had been locked down in a Bronx

nursing home, former Civil Court Judge John Phillips was finally freed to move into a Park Slope nursing home.

About 4:30 p.m., a burly sedan pulled up in front of Castle Senior Living at 1 Prospect Park West, and Phillips, a former borough resident, got out and surveyed his new digs (see photo at left).

"I'm home," he said.

It's not quite Phillips' native Bedford-Stuyvesant, but it's a far cry from his residence of the last two years: a dingy Bronx nursing home that his lawyer Ezra Glaser described as a place "where people go to die."

Phillips' wife moved to Brooklyn by "milestone," but Glaser said more work remains to be done, including "wrangling over" the missing money so that the former millionaire can make ends meet.

— Dana Rubinstein

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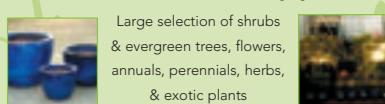
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WHERE TO GO

EDITORS' PICKS

SATURDAY

May 19



John song

Two Brooklyn Heights residents have been working blowing the lid off of the presidency. In this case, however, the commander-in-question is John Adams. Tonight, James Grant's biography and Terry Quinn's operetta will both be excerpted at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

8 pm at the Brooklyn Historical Society, corner of Prospect Place and Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights. \$45, \$30 for members. For information, call (718) 222-4111.

SUNDAY

May 20



Cheap chow

Though the traditional gift for a 20th anniversary is china, San Loco, the Mexican restaurant chain, is doing things up this year and giving customers something more useful: 20-cent tacos. All day long, the tasty snacks are going to be served at the discounted price, which leaves you plenty of cash left over for the house-made margaritas and tasty pumpkin flan.

Baingan at 11 am at San Loco (1601 St. Ann St. at Orange Avenue in Williamsburg). For information, call (718) 218-8479 or visit www.sanloco.com.

4:30 pm, 5:00 pm and 9:15 pm at BAM Fisher (30 Lafayette Place at Ashland Place in Fort Greene). Tickets are \$10. For information, call (718) 635-4100 or visit www.bam.org.



MONDAY

May 21



French 'Maids'

Tonight, director Christopher Miller's 1974 version of "My Fair Lady" will be screening. One of Jean Genet's best-loved plays, this story finds two maids taking turns pretending to be their employer. Think it as water cooler chatter for the crossressing domestic set.

8 pm at Galapagos Art Space (70 N. 6th Street at Wythe Avenue in Williamsburg). For information, call (718) 384-4556 or visit www.galapagosartspace.com.

WEDNESDAY

May 23

Slam funk

See and Be Scene kicks off Memorial Day weekend early with their annual "Funk-a-thon" at Galapagos. With five performances by Brooklyn's own soul band Becca's Brow and Pennsylvania import Philadelphia Slick, the party is bound to be hotter than the weather.

10 pm at Galapagos Art Space (70 N. 6th Street at Wythe Avenue in Williamsburg). For information, call (718) 384-4556 or visit www.galapagosartspace.com.

THURSDAY

May 24



Another kind of mother

Check out Brooklyn Reading Works' "Edgy Mother's Event," featuring moms — and one dad — from their work. Novelties, including Amy Sohn (pictured), will share their stories, but the most popular person in the room might be the bartender — the price of admission includes free drinks.

8 pm at the Old Stone House (Fifth Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets in Park Slope). For information, visit www.brooklynreadingworks.com.

NINE DAYS IN BROOKLYN

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal Jay

SAT, MAY 19

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

IT'S MY PARK DAY: Volunteers are needed to clean up Prospect Park. All day, you'll receive a free t-shirt and other goodies. All ages welcome. 10 am to 1 pm. Meet at the Ocean and Prospect Park entrance. Free.

SONIA STUDIO STROLL: South of the Navy Yard, the Brooklyn Museum's Sonia Studio is holding studio tours and works of nearly 100 artists at over 40 venues. Noon to 5 pm. For info, call (718) 222-4111.

STUDIO TOUR: 15th annual Park Slope tour.

Local artists open their studios to invite the public to see works in progress from established and emerging artists. Self-guided walking tour. 1 pm to 5 pm. Details at www.bwca.org. Free.

PEDAL BOATING: Cruise Brooklyn's freshwater canal for a price of \$15 per hour, plus \$10 deposit refund. Noon to 5 pm. Enter Prospect Park at the Ocean and Prospect Park entrance. www.pedalboatpark.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD: Walk along the streets of the Upper Park Slope, Prospect Heights, discover the unique characteristics and essence of the neighborhood. 1 pm to 5 pm. Details at www.brooklynneighborhoods.org.

GREENWOOD CEMETERY: Jeff Richman leads the tour "Battle Hill and Beyond: From the Cemetery to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden." 1 pm to 3 pm. Visitor's Center, 225 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn Park Entrance. Call 311 and ask for the cemetery office.

GREENWOOD CEMETERY: Cemetery.

LEONARD COOPER: The author of "The Dog Who Would Be King" and "The Water Hole" reads his new book "The Dog Who Would Be King" at the Prospect Park Library. 1 pm to 3 pm. Details at www.brooklynlibrary.org.

FORBES CYCLOPS TOUR: NY 360 takes visitors two key neighborhoods of Brooklyn's row houses and historic landmarks. 1 pm to 5 pm. Call for meeting location. (718) 393-7537.

RED HOOK TOUR: Brooklyn Center for the Arts presents a walking tour of the neighborhood. Francis Monroe leads. \$13. 5 pm to 6 pm. Details at 255 Red Hook Street, between 3rd and Carroll Streets. (718) 788-8500.

HAROLD'S BIKING ADVENTURE: Adventure on a Shoestring celebrates Brooklyn's 125th birthday. Learn about the history of Brooklyn's cycling culture. 1 pm to 5 pm. Meets in front of the Municipal Building at lower Manhattan. (212) 265-2626.



Pony up: Prospect Park's carousel, which dates back to 1912, is now open for the season. It's our favorite way to go horseback riding in the park.

Augustine's Church, 116 Sixth Ave. (718) 809-0963.

GALLERY PLAYERS PRESENTS: "Brave New Words" features a variety of readings and music from 8 pm to 11 pm. 149 14th St. (212) 352-3101.

PAPER MOON PLAYERS PRESENTS: "Bravo! The Best of Broadway" features classic songs from hit Broadway shows. \$10, 88 seats. 8 pm. Emmerich's, 217 Clinton St. (212) 641-5341.

BOOK READING AND CONCERT: Author and actress Lynn Mitchell reads an evening of John Adams in word and song. \$30, 500 members. 8 pm. Corner of

Smith and Hoyt streets. To inquire, call (718) 635-4100.

CHARITY WALK: Walkathon to raise money for a library in a girl's middle school in Lower Manhattan. (212) 265-2626.

Flemington and Clinton streets. (718) 222-4111, ext. 226.

OTHER

OPEN HOUSE: Seabago Canoe Club hosts a day of open houses on Jamaica Bay. 10 am to 5 pm. www.seabagocanoeclub.org. Call for details.

STOOP SALE: Sackett Street, between Smith and Hoyt streets. 10 am to 4 pm. (718) 635-4100.

CHARITY WALK: Walkathon to raise money for a library in a girl's middle school in Lower Manhattan. (212) 265-2626.

CIVIC CALENDAR

SATURDAY, MAY 19

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Community Board 6: Forum. On the agenda: proposed changes to the zoning of 20th Street between Coney Island and Ocean Avenue. Call (718) 971-8349 for information.

MORNING MARKET

Community Board 6: Monthly board meeting. Norwegian Christian Home.

Community Board 6: Forum. On the agenda: proposed changes to the zoning of 20th Street between Coney Island and Ocean Avenue. Call (718) 971-8349 for information.

COMMUNITY BOARD 6: FORUM

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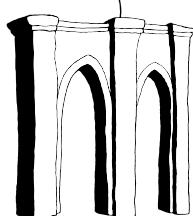
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THE stoop

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS-DOWNTOWN DUMBO

Wal-Mart is not dead yet

If Wal-Mart phoning it in on the Fulton Mall? Seems like a reasonable argument to make, since the store's owner, Michael Bast, was asked to participate in a survey about how to improve the busy, yet underdeveloped, shopping strip.

But this was no objective study. In fact, such calls are typically made in an effort to convince the recipient one way or another, rather than to hear their opinion.

That's how Brooklyn Heights resident Michael Bast felt after receiving the call last week.

"They asked me if I wanted to feel about having a big-box store on the mall or in downtown Brooklyn," Bast said, adding that the survey-taker was steering him towards the notion big-box stores would "improve" the mall.

Most people thought the calls might have come from Wal-Mart, which is known to be scouting a spot on or near the Fulton Mall.

Didn't Wal-Mart get the message when leaders, protesters, community groups and residents converged on Albany Saturday, February 10, to scream "No Wal-Mart" over and over into a megaphone?

Well, Wal-Mart's playing it cagey.

"We can't comment on possible projects," a Wal-Mart spokesman told us, "but I can say that we are still looking in putting a store in Brooklyn."

He did say that although Wal-Mart has conducted these kinds of surveys before, he hasn't seen one in a couple of years, and they aren't doing one now.

But with all the development currently happening in Downtown Brooklyn, it's not a stretch to think that other big-box stores mentioned in the survey, like Target and Costco in particular, are keeping their eye on a future mall spot. (Calls to Target and Costco were not returned.)

The survey could be a way of drumming up enthusiasm for such a store on the mall before doing anything official, like going to the Fulton Mall Improvement Association or Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce (of which Wal-Mart is a dues-paying member), to say you know what you want.

Calling it "progress" and "a new plan" is a great way to make residents a little more receptive to the idea.

Not that it worked on Bast. "I told them I didn't care either way," he said.

THE KITCHEN SINK

Hallelujah! After 12 years of ongoing renovations, the scuffling at **Saint Ann's School** on Pierrepont Street has finally come down. It's been up so long that residents are going to have to wait twice as long for them to be in the right neighborhood when they walk past the school now. You can thank **Keypson** for all the torn up streets in DUMBO lately. The gas company is installing new high-pressure lines and upgrading its services for all the new residential buildings in the neighborhood.

Assemblyman Joan Millman (D-Brooklyn Heights) wants to come to the rescue of DUMBO artists who barely afford their rent. Millman's bill to create affordable housing for artists just got a sponsor in the Senate.

Email us at Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com

HEIGHTS LOWDOWN



Christie Rizk

This old house: Restored!

By Christie Rizk

The Brooklyn Paper

For the Addams Family to a real family.

This Brooklyn Heights house, long abandoned and then horribly damaged in a 2004 fire — is set to become a real civilization, thanks to a local developer and restorer who refused to see the grand old rot away.

The house at 135 Joralemon St. had spent the last decade in a state of general dilapidation, its owners unable to find buyers and forced to ride by residents as the derelict house of Brooklyn Heights," said Brooklyn Heights Association Executive Director Judy Stanley.

The house, a 19th-century historic landmark since 1966, had fallen into disrepair, despite a city rule that says all landmarks have to be kept in "a state of good repair."

By 2003, *Time Out New York* even called it one of the 13 worst buildings in the city, so easy to picture Uncle Fester roaming the attic, testing light bulbs in his mouth — or Jeffrey Dahmer in the basement, according to the magazine.

The Dec. 31, 2004 fire completed the house's decay (see photo left), but then the city stepped in.

"We spent a year trying to get the city to fix up the house," said John Palmer, preservation counsel for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The Commission even tried suing to get the owner,

Aldred Palmer, to comply with the demands to fix the house.

Instead, Palmer sold the three-story house for \$2.4 million in October 2005 to a local developer with a background in high-end residential renovations.

Haines spent seven months restoring the house to its former glory.

"I've been wanting to do the restoration ever since I saw the place," said Haines, who lives on Garden Place. "It's been a very fulfilling project."

The 174-year-old house is unique, with its original oak beams, which the house was actually built in 1828.

Palmer, who lives on Hicks Street, didn't want to comment on the new renovations.

Haines' work is impressive.

"I think everyone in the neighborhood was looking forward to it being restored," said Heights resident John Localo.

Localo said the house is back on the market.



The once-decrepit house at 135 Joralemon St., a neighborhood eyesore even before a 2004 fire (photo left), has been lovingly restored and is on the market (right).



The once-decrepit house at 135 Joralemon St., a neighborhood eyesore even before a 2004 fire (photo left), has been lovingly restored and is on the market (right).

Saving DUMBO while they can

By Christie Rizk

The Brooklyn Paper

The scene of DUMBO gathered thick with schmoozie, eat, drink ... and save the neighborhood from overdevelopment.

The DUMBO Neighborhood Association's "Town Hall" meeting on Monday centered on getting the area designated as a historic district.

"We need to do whatever we can to preserve DUMBO's unique character," said association President Karen Johnson.

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May 19, 2007

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THE stoop

CARROLL GARDENS-COBBLE HILL BOERUM HILL RED HOOK

Blogs ain't got reality

The candle-lit, carved wood bar on the corner of Hoyt and Bergen streets has been the unofficial hub of most Brooklyn bars since before the neighborhood had a name.

So last month, when an anonymous tipster posted a warning about the imminent closure on the foodie blog, Eater.com, people flipped out.

The online set held rambling virtual conversations about the economics of running a \$60-a-head tavern. They mused about the possibility of a Starbucks taking over the building, a recognized historic landmark, and theorized what allowed neighborhood institutions like the bar would take down next.

Anxiety about the rumored change bubbled up from the blogosphere until finally, the manager, Jason Furiani, decided to stop the gossip mill at it's source.

"For almost 13 years I've worked for the individuals who now own/closed the Brooklyn Inn ... and ... they have NO PLANS to turn into anything other than what it is," the Brooklyn Inn," said Furiani, a longtime resident of Carroll Gardens, in a May 4 e-mail to Eater.com.

That post, Furiani wrote, "went into the blogosphere, he told me, never a bloggin' at the Inn this week."

"Apparently, people read that s---," he said of the online forums.

ON OUR OTHER
stoop

PAGES

B'HEIGHTS

The old house

PARK SLOPE

Pizzeria gutted

BAY RIDGE

The dead spee

FT. GREENE →

Blackstone's

online at BrooklynPaper.com



Ariella Cohen



Parks advocates want to transform the run-down Thomas Greene playground on Douglass Street into a skateboard park.

They're gleaming the Gowanus

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn's skateboard parks may get a nice face lift with a new proposal to turn a long-neglected Boerum Hill park into a haven for "borderers."

The plan would transform the lightly used Thomas Greene Playground, which sits on Douglass Street between Third Avenue and Union Street, into a destination for kids who currently practice their airborne tricks on benches, handrails, wide steps and even flower beds.

"Kids love to play and should be in a place that is better for them than the streets," said Jo Anne Simon, a member of Friends of Douglass/Gowanus, which will be the park's primary steward and developer.

The plan, which in co-called character could happen in a year, would add a former dining room, a painted mural and a pool table that is enclosed by a patio table that could in the future be booted to make way for tables, a nod to the bar's futureless past, Furiani said.

If you follow the news, it's how deeply the blogs have affected how we live in our neighborhood. Food blogs have broken many a tale, most recently the tabloid-friendly story of Porchetta chef Jason Neroni. They have become 24-7 talkboxes — and we're not just doing what it used to be. The characters of classes are not in bar anymore; they're behind a computer talking about the bar.

Although in reality, the Inn was not in danger, the rumor spread as fast as word of a keg party in a high school because, well, everyone was at his computer instead of at the bar, knocking back a beer — and a shot of the truth.

THE KITCHEN SINK

B'WACK: **Brooklyn Waterfront Artists' Coalition** opened its annual show on the Red Hook waterfront last week, with an appearance by **Borough President Markowitz**. "Come back to the neighborhood in 10 years, and you won't even recognize it," the prez told the artist. Hand and hand with the art, though, was a new emphasis on healthy eating. "The greens are fresh fruits are reasonably priced at K & Y Fruit and Vegetable," which opened this month at 291 Court St., near DeGraw Street. But plenty of local tongues are gliding over the joint's name. E-mail us at Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com

voted to the group by the Parks Department.

"Our goal is to bring people into the park and give them choices of activities," said Simon, who plans to line up funding from local officials before bringing the plan to Community Board 6.

One local concrete surfer Poets, said that all he needs are a few planter boxes to double as ledges for his airtime.

"There are a lot of skaters here, but nowhere to skate without worrying that the board is going to shoot out into traffic," said Poets, who freely admits that he has more than his share of knee problems.

Poets and a partner, Michelle Simon, are opening Smith Street's first skate shop and cafe next week, replacing an organic-food market.

The veteran "borderer" said that the hottest neighborhood skate place now is a decrepit flowerpot on the corner of Union and Bond streets, barely an offie — a "jump," in skate lingo — from the rush of traffic.

This is a small, but symbolic way of retaining that "American spirit," he said.

The fancy lamps were installed on Clinton Street between Atlantic and Hamilton avenues in Cobble Hill last year. A few years earlier, the lamps sat on Smith Street and on Atlantic Avenue. In all cases, the lamps were funded with contributions from local officials and private or business donors.

Sam Cooper, spokesman for Assemblywoman Joann Ariola, said the City Council voted to keep the lamps.

The State that his boss likes the idea. But residents should get going: A spokesman for the Department of Design and Construction said the agency would have to know who was paying for the lamps before they could even be ordered. By then, said spokesman John Spavins, it might be too late.

"So somebody better start burning the midnight oil — and fast."

— Cohen

Lighten up, Columbia

The Brooklyn Paper

Old-fashioned street lamps could soon light the town of Columbia.

A group of business and residents on the burgeoning waterfront strip have launched a campaign to replace the oh-so-2007 street lamps with the original vintage lanterns that blazed along the avenue.

"This is one of the oldest parts of the city and it would be a real snub not to have the old-style lamps," said Frank Manzone, a real-estate broker in the area who recently sent petitions to elected officials.

A historic luminaire costs approximately \$20,000 more than a standard street pole, an extra cost that must be paid by the community.

Craig Hammerman said the cost was worth it. "There is growing fear we are losing parts of our history and values as a community," he said.

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— Cohen



The gentrifying Columbia Street Waterfront District wants antique streetlamps like these on nearby Atlantic Avenue.

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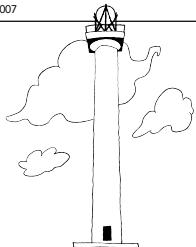
View of the Leon Levy and Shelby White Court. Left: Marble statue of a youthful Hercules, Roman, Flavian period, A.D. 69-98. Gift of Mrs. Frederick F. Thompson, 1903. Right: Marble statue of Venus, Roman, Imperial, 1st or 2nd century A.D. Copy of a Greek statue of the 3rd or 2nd century B.C.; Purchase, 1952. Both works from The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo: LaFleche Cohen/Amis Kirschner.

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THE stoop

FORT GREENE-CLINTON HILL

Whose park is it anyway?

What could possibly be the downside of a day-long festival celebrating Brooklyn culture, food and music in Fort Greene Park?

Just ask the community board. On Saturday, July 14, the event organizers will hold "Fort Greene Fest," which they have dubbed a "celebration of the cultures, cuisine, and artistic diversity of Brooklyn."

The organizers expect anywhere from 3,000 to 8,000 attendees to flock the park and visit the Fest's 100 tents between noon and 10 pm.

Participants will be able to eat in food from 69 restaurants,

watch locally made short films, and listen to the likes of Afro-Cuban percussionist Tracey Johnson, Fort Greene native and songwriter Barbara Tucker, and soul singer Selan.

"We have serious concerns about any event with amplified sound," said Community Board 2 District Manager Rob Peris.

"Although Fort Greene Park, at 30 acres, is the largest in the district, it's not so large that you can find a quiet place in the park if there's a lot of noise or if you're trying to sit in a shaded area, housing very close on three sides, [and on the other side is] a hospital."

But the community board's problem with the festival isn't limited to mere noise. It also feels that property has been breached — after all, members of the community board didn't find out about the festival until after it had been announced by the Parks Department (you know, the city agency that actually operates, maintains and manages the park).

The process complaint wasn't only the board's complaint.



The Brooklyn Paper / Dana Rubinstein

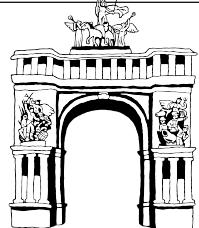
Dana Rubinstein

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Greene Acres

Photo by Dana Rubinstein



THE stoop

PARK SLOPE PROSPECT HEIGHTS, SUNSET PARK WINDSOR TERRACE, KENSINGTON

Blue Monday in a dirty park

A yes, it's "chicken bone season" again in Prospect Park. Does it recognize the term? Perhaps. "Gah! Monday," Marta says as you call it. Take a stroll this Monday morning if you have never seen it: the park starts the week filled with trash.

The trash overflows, water bottles, soda cans and doggie bags spill out, plus there are garbage bags piled high next to the cans. Many bags have been ripped open (by wild dogs, perhaps) and trash is strewn everywhere.

In addition to the overflowing trash bins, there are those who picnics in the park and then leave litter to clean up after themselves. They leave the picnic table covered with used paper plates, the ground covered with leftover food and trash like a dog's mess.

This is not a once-in-a-blue occurrence, it happens every weekend (Memorial Day is the worst, so get ready!). But there is no reason why we should ever have a day when our park looks like a trash heap. It is simply unacceptable.

There are two problems with the trash situation, said Eugene Patron, a spokesman for the Prospect Park Alliance. The first is that the Parks Department doesn't put enough money aside for trash collection (Sanitation's jurisdiction ends at the entrance to the park). The second is that it is difficult to enforce the clean-up rules.

Whatever the solution to the trash collection problem, it's going to take money. More trash bins would help, but then we would need more trucks and more money to empty them. Last year, Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights) secured funding for a new maintenance worker, who would be responsible for trash on park paths. But even with a new piece of equipment, the trash collection is still playing catch-up with — and losing to — the trash.

Enforcement will take effort and vigilance on the part of the Park Enforcement Police. Any gathering of more than 20 people in a park or on a Park reservation is a permit issued that the holder is responsible for cleaning up their premises. Most people don't get the permits (after all, they're having a picnic, not a political rally!), but that doesn't mean they're not required to clean up. So what do they do? Many leave the area a stink bomb.

The Park Police has to step up its patrol of the most popular picnicking spots. That means the area around Ninth Street, for instance, and the wooded part behind the Picnic House. Anywhere there are trash or waste is a target, which will need to be punished. Citations can be handed out to folks who do not clean up after themselves. If the 78th Precinct can give a hand (it does with enforcing dog-leash laws), that would be even more eyes on the dirty people, and more tickets.

Since we can't rely on the parks department to clean up the park, we have to rely on the Parks Department to clean up our park and enforce its rules. So next time you see someone leaving without cleaning up, call 311. If the city doesn't get the complaint calls, it won't step up the effort to keep our park clean.



Nica Lalli



Fey on 7th

Tina Fey of "Saturday Night Live" and "30 Rock" was on Seventh Avenue on Wednesday to film "Baby Mama," her movie about a single Yuppie (Fey), who hires a surrogate mother ("SNL" sidekick Amy Poehler) so she can stay on the career track.

ON OUR OTHER
stoop
PAGES

B'HEIGTS
That old house
BOERUM HILL
New slate park
BAY RIDGE
The dog who speaks
FL. GREENLAW
Bike lane news

onlineatBrooklynPaper.com

By Nica Lalli
The Brooklyn Paper

Dough! Fire guts a pizzeria



Pizza Plus owner Roz Bayne talks to neighbors after fire.

By Nica Lalli
The Brooklyn Paper

File this under the "no good deed goes unpunished" category: the fire that gutted Pizza Plus on Seventh Avenue last Thursday started after a welder accidentally ignited a fire-control system that was being upgraded.

"The worst thing about this is that I was trying to do the right thing," said Bayne, owner of Pizza Plus, which broke out at 9:30 am.

More than 100 firefighters battled the blaze, which was declared under control by 10:15 am.

Seventh Avenue was closed in both directions for more than two hours, and dozens of

people gathered, first to watch the fire, but then to console Bayne and her employees (whose ranks include Bayne's son).

Well-wishers brought coffee, doughnuts and even flowers as Bayne and her crew realized their hard-made damage their restaurant, which borders Second and 11th Streets.

Residents of the apartments upstairs were forced to relocate.

Bayne, who lives in nearby Ditmas Park, vowed to rebuild.

"We will be back," said Bayne, whose 20-year-old institution is much loved by Slope parents not only for its pizza, but also for the big cabinet of coloring books and crayons that kept under-aged customers busy.

Hospital fixes noise woe

By Beethoven Bong
The Brooklyn Paper

The mystery of the high-pitched squeak on Fifth Street has been solved! It turns out, the tea-kettle-like wail was being caused by some faulty equipment at New York Methodist Hospital.

That week, the hospital promptly replaced the broken equipment — six dried-out fan belts inside one of the cooling towers on its Seventh Avenue side — after The Stoop made inquiries.

Neighbors greeted the relief with ... relief.

"It's awesome that I don't hear it anymore,"

said Valerie Zilberman, who lives on Sixth Street near the hospital. "I'm really glad that it's over, it was freaking me out."

A neighbor, Chris Deodes, added, "Oh yeah, I'm glad it's gone."

Hospital spokeswoman Lyn Hill said Methodist responded almost immediately after being told of the problem.

"She said they had the same problem eight years ago with a similar set of fan belts."

A louder sound caused by a busted gearbox inside another cooling tower was discovered after the belts were fixed, but the hospital squelched that problem, too, Hill said.



Coolant tanks in front of New York Methodist Hospital.



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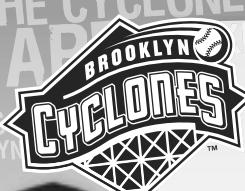
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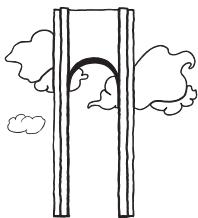
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THE stoop

BAY RIDGE-BENSONHURST DYKER HEIGHTS BATH BEACH

Spark-filled memories

Sir, please back away slowly from the sparkler. Haven't you heard about the kid who burned his eye out with one of those?"

True story — I heard it from a man who knew a guy growing up who saw a human — and now he is on a mission to spread the truth about the evil of sparklers to every man, woman and child in Brooklyn.

I first confronted the fire evangelist about a year ago as I was setting off a few sparklers to give to the neighborhood kids (I'm that kind of guy, what can I say?). The fire evangelist overheard me asking the counter-off at Associated Supermarket on Third Avenue, and he dutifully took action:

"Why the hell are you looking for firecrackers?" the old man said. "You looking to get someone killed?"

I thought I must have misheard, and I calmly explained that I was looking for any sticks of dynamite, only some kid-die sparklers.

"That is what I said, firecrackers," the old man growled. "Are you looking to burn your child's eye out?"

"What my child's eye out? What do you mean? This guy is a freak. Freaks like him are on the right side of the law. Every store I went into was told the same thing: sparklers are illegal and dangerous. I began to think that maybe I was the freak. I mean, how could nine counter-girls and one cranky old man all be wrong?"

But what exactly is so bad about sparklers? Everything, say our local cops.

"Sparklers are harmful and illegal," said Officer Steve Agosta of the 62nd Precinct. "Sparklers are very dangerous. They burn fast and start major fires, so we advise that you don't do them."

It isn't even June, but Officer Agosta wants to get the word out that she and her comrades are going to war against fireworks — and the meek "zero tolerance" (caveat) for sparklers.

This means heavy fines, or even possibly jail time, for possession of *any* firework.

At a recent 62nd Precinct Community Council meeting, a couple of officers said that if the public doesn't get its appetite for destruction under control, the cops plan on investigating themselves to our barbeques and cuffing people who set off fireworks.

"If you store fireworks in a private house, a small spark could ignite the flames and the whole building could go up," said Agosta.

Exploding houses in Brooklyn? Am I being put on here?

Yes, says Bill Weimer, vice president of Phantom Fireworks, one of the largest retail sellers of incendiary devices in America. He also has a list of reasons why.

"Truth is, these aren't your father's fireworks," said Weimer. "Today's fireworks are tested in 200 different ways and are safer than they ever were."

Weimar says the vast majority of injuries come from "drunk Uncle Charlie showing off in the backyard," but says that when used responsibly, "fireworks are all about good-old-fash'd family fun."

It isn't just fun, it is a tradition, and one that Yellow Hooker doesn't plan on giving up any time soon. Heck, I don't See **YELLOW** on page 4



Matthew Lysiak



The tomb in this photo (arrow) will have to be moved as part of the demolition of the Bay Ridge United Methodist Church.

The dead speak at Ridge's doomed 'Green Church'

By Matthew Lysiak
The Brooklyn Paper

Another voice has jumped into the debate over the fate of the "Green Church" — that of the grave.

When the Bay Ridge United Methodist Church building was built almost 100 years ago, it was consecrated with a ceremony for the dead who were transferred from the original church. This very same dead who will now be dug up when the Green Church is torn down for condos.

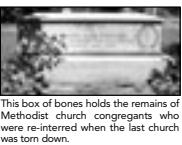
It's almost certainly not those former congregants who will be treated, says local historian David Elliger.

He recently unearthed a news article from 1901 that made it clear that early Methodist congregants felt that the church grounds were sacred.

The post-war generation did not desire the bones of their ancestors scattered to the four winds of heaven," the article reported.

The relocation of the congregation's remains was not necessary until 1901, when the city purchased the site of Grace's Methodist Church — including its cemetery — in order to expand roads around what is now Sixth Avenue and 67th Street.

At that time, cemetery members were invited to watch as workers sifted the dirt "to make sure that not a single bone was left behind," said the church's then-Pastor W.L. Davidson.



This box of bones holds the remains of Methodist church congregants who were re-interred when the last church was torn down.

The bones were dug up and moved to their current resting place in front of the Green Church at the corner of Fourth and Ovington avenues in 1901 (see photo).

"It is clear that this was very important to the community at that time," says Elliger. "It was like they really believed in a proper resting place for their dead."

The engraving says that "211 bodies were transferred from the old church to the First Methodist Episcopal Church in the town of New Utrecht at Covenhoven Lane and Sixth Avenue. Ninety of the persons were unidentified. The names of the others were not known."

The newspaper article also reported that some remains were of communal and historical importance, including church elder Adrián Bogart. "His body was held in high regard by all Methodists," the article said.

Today's congregation does not feel the same obligation to allow the community to visit the remains of their forefathers — and it isn't afraid to say it.

"It is none of your business, or anyone else's," said Pastor Robert Emerick. "We are a conservative religious organization, and we know how to handle human remains."

Community members looking for information on the current fate of the remains have run into a stone wall, according to the pastor, who says that the church that was Bay Ridge United Methodist's green hut. But this contentious relationship wasn't created in six nights and seven days.

The incident occurred after reports of the sale of the Methodist cathedral, when Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) hosted a community meeting in hopes of opening up the space with a planned megachurch. But the congregation fought back, claiming that the churchman was trying to infringe on the separation of church and state.

Emerick was later quoted as referring to the church as "our little doghouse" to the chairman of neighborhood activists hoping to preserve a piece of Bay Ridge past. Afterwards the pastor decided it would be best to turn the space into a neighborhood center.

"I have decided that I am not going to dignify this process with a response any longer," Emerick said. "I am not happy with how the media has handled this, so I am not going to answer any more questions."

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Who saved Brooklyn? Many claim credit

By Mat Probasco
for The Brooklyn Paper

A few decades ago, Brooklyn's minimum wage was \$10.00. Prospect Park was a dumpy bum camp and Park Slope had more late night gun battles than hip restaurants.

On Saturday, community activists from yesteryear met at Borough Hall to tally up the heroes and goats from Brooklyn's slow-but-steady turn-

around from the 1970s to the '90s. And most speakers — at least the ones who have to get re-elected — credited We the People.

"We owe the citizenry a great deal of gratitude for what they did in the 90s to make Brooklyn the vibrant, cosmopolitan James Brennan (D-Park Slope)."

Street by street, residents banded together to force banks to issue loans with Brooklyn, despite the time remortgaging the slum. They hoped to save the borough's landmarks from the wrecking ball, and direct cops to brazen criminals.

"You can't really talk about the rise in Brooklyn without the pub-

lick of the community against crime," said Brennan, who also praised former Mayor David Dinkins and former Governor Mario Cuomo, for adding police. (He knocked former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani for taking the credit for safer streets.)

Even when crime was at its worst, John Muir was organizing the John Muir Environmental Center, a group that believed reviving the crime-ridden park would be key to revitalizing Brooklyn.

"The whole park seemed to be dying," Muir said.

People were afraid to walk near

the park for fear that muggers would leap from its ledges, which the city removed later, renovated.

As New York's economy changed from manufacturing to service- and technology-based, much of Brooklyn was abandoned as a post-industrial wasteland, panelists at the symposium said.

The plan removed eyesores from the park.

In the meantime, Philip and Mary Gallagher purchased what was once a brownstone in Park Slope in 1963 — and then spent the next decade cajoling his friends to do the same rather than flee to the suburbs.

Orner, founder of the Brownstone

Revival Committee, and others helped the Brooklyn Union Gas Company to buy old homes and restore them as showrooms. The company offered tours of homes renovated with new appliances, heating and cooling systems.

Now, perhaps, the only worry is that the newfound safe, clean borough will become a victim of its own success.

Brooklyn's desirability is encouraging intense growth that brings more people, more cars and some of the very things the neighborhood residents hoped were in the past.

The drastic population influx could give way to Manhattan-style residential density. Love them or hate them, projects like Atlantic

Yards and all the new residential towers in Downtown Brooklyn are happening because developers think there is a market for the thousands of units of housing and tens of millions of square feet of office and retail space.

Many of the people who "saved" Brooklyn can't afford to live there now.

But Muir said there is a solution: responsible development that puts high-rises along wide avenues while protecting the smaller homes on the side streets.

"The trick is to save one while making room for the other," Muir said.

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Teen surrenders cell in Heights

By Lilo H. Stanton
The Brooklyn Paper

84th Precinct

POLICE BLOTTER

A teenager lost his cellphone to a trio of robbers that attacked him on May 4 on Henry Street, police said.

The 15-year-old victim was around 7:15 p.m. when the three strangers stopped him and asked him to take off his phone. The teen didn't want to do that, but one of the men insisted he hand it over.

Before the stunned boy could respond, the thugs grabbed his cell and a high-end calculator. But they also took his money.

"Give me your money or I'll punch you," one of the thieves said.

The boy was cash-less, though, and the thugs fled on Jayron Street with the two electronics, valued at \$500.

Moms go wild

A woman who came with her children in tow — got into a brawl on Montague Street that ended with one of the women under arrest and facing grand larceny charges.

The 43-year-old victim stopped by a bank branch, near Henry Street, around 12:45 p.m. on May 12, when she heard an argument break out between a man and a woman.

Luckily, Police Officer Tamara Keaton of the 84th Precinct happened upon the scene. She arrested the 48-year-old woman and recovered the wallet, which still held several credit cards and the victim's drivers license.

Bus bust

May 10 was no ordinary day on the bus.

Police arrested an older man after he beat a bus driver with his wooden cane during a pre-dawn trip down Atlantic Avenue.

The 62-year-old suspect now faces assault charges after he attacked the driver when the man tried to break out a fight the senior had started with his supervisor, police said. The 47-year-old driver, a New Jersey resident, suffered brief bleeding on his cheek after he was lashed by the senior around 2:30 a.m.

Problems began after the bus picked up the suspect at the cor-

ner Jay and Livingston streets and the rider quickly got into a debate with the driver, Atlantic Avenue, police said.

After the man got off the bus and tried to re-enter, instead, the attorney general's office arrested him on May 10.

When police arrived, they searched the area and could not find the suspect at first. But when they checked the nearby Henry Street, they found their man. There was no sign of the man, but he was in the vicinity of the bus stop.

Wheelie gone

Cops seemed to suffer more than people last week when it came to crime. Brooklyn police officers were轮到轮子 when they were taken from a 2006 Honda parked on Willow Street, near Clark Street.

The 22-year-old suspect allegedly snatched the wheelie bin and the rest of the trash from the truck with his swarthy draw as the victim waited for a Brooklyn-bound train shortly after 7 p.m. on May 12, police said.

At least three cars were snatched from Brooklyn Streets, and at least three more were stolen between May 3 and May 12, police said.

The 27-year-old victim was walking home from work around 6 a.m. when the two strangers approached him behind, near the intersection of Atlantic Avenue.

A 2004 Toyota Camry was stolen from Flatbush Avenue, near Myrtle Street, on May 8.

The 31-year-old owner parked the small SUV just after 8 a.m. on May 8 and returned at 8:30 a.m. to find a front window broken, the interior trashed and the safety devices missing.

A 1996 Toyota Camry was stolen from Flatbush Avenue, near Myrtle Street, on May 8.

The 31-year-old owner, a 51-year-old Queen, left the car at 8:30 a.m. and returned an hour and a half later to find it gone.

Another Toyota RAV4 parked on Court Street, lost its airbags. The 73-year-old victim parked the small SUV just after 8 a.m. on May 8 and returned at 8:30 a.m. and found a front window broken, the interior trashed and the safety devices missing.

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Dial P for perp as thug steals gal's cellphone

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

A woman had her cellphone stolen right out of her hand after a perp tried to grab her

purse at the corner of Fourth Avenue and 12th Street at 2 pm on May 12.

The 23-year-old victim told cops that she was near the corner when a thief ran up and tried to grab her pocketbook. When she resisted, the perp took the Samsung cellphone and ran off towards Third Avenue.

The woman did not get a good look at the man.

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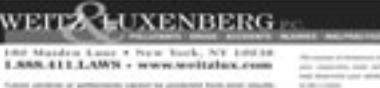
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This smells bad

The Rite-Aid drugstore on Seventh Avenue lost thousands of dollars in perfume when a brazen thief, a team of hoodlums, and a naked display case, broke into a locked display case and stole the contents on May 12.

The theft took place at around 8:30 pm, though a security camera is trained on the display case, cops said.

Police put the total value of the stolen scents at \$1,472, but a manager told The Brooklyn Paper that the loss was "more than \$5,000."

"There were three guys who

78TH PRECINCT

came in and broke into the place," said Prem Persaud, a manager at the store, which is at Fifth Street and 78th Avenue. "I got away with more than \$5,000." The thief took place at around 8:30 pm, though a security camera is trained on the display case, cops said.

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KITCHEN SINK

Continued from page 3

The Brooklyn Paper's very own Nico Lalli will be reading from her memoir, *Nothing: Something to Believe In at the Barnes & Noble* right here in her "hometown." Come hear all her family secrets and tales of godlessness on Friday, May 24 at 7:30 pm. The Fifth Annual Brooklyn Book Festival didn't get far enough. It's time to build bridges for people with disabilities at 525 Fifth Ave., but the organization did get the **Local Innovations Support Corporation of New York**'s award for being the "Champion of Change" for its work in the community. The group has done a lot for the honor for the work it is doing in Red Hook.... Not all developers are as unpopular as **Bruce Ratner**. Some like the Slope's own **Andrew Kimball**, president and chief executive officer of the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, get awards. The **Steiner Studios** Building Brooklyn Award on July 18 at the **Steiner Studios**. This year's private winner is **Joshua Muss**, president of Muss Development. ... **Maggie Mo's** was closed for a week, but it is open for business again. The reason? The mystery closure? Remodeling the counter for outdoor eating. Now you can enjoy that \$15 cone in the fresh Brooklyn air!

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and wheel covers. The total value of the theft was \$2,000, cops said.

Bicycle thief

An exercise-minded thief stole a man's hybrid road bicycle from his front door around 10 am on May 7, cops said.

The 32-year-old woman told police that she believed the thief had a key to her apartment, which is at 8th Avenue and 1st Street between Park and Sterling places, because there were no signs of forced entry.

The bike was worth \$400, she said.

iGone

A Sixth Avenue woman lost her iPod and a digital camera to a thief who broke into her apartment on May 7.

The 46-year-old victim told cops that the theft must have occurred between 12:30 and 1:15 pm, when she was not in the apartment. She parked her car in the Sixth and Seventh streets. There were no signs of forced entry on the front door, which is on the second floor, between the two sets of stairs.

An unspecified amount of jewelry was also pilfered in the heist.

Stealthy thief

A man who works in a Fifth Avenue gift shop lost his May 10, although the bag was never out of her sight, said.

The Houdini-like crook, once seen, was never seen again, and at 7 pm, cops said. The woman had reported to work at the store, which is at Baltic and 5th Streets, placed her handbag behind the counter.

She told cops that the counter was never unattended. Yet when she returned the bag at the end of the shift, she noted that the wallet — which had contained \$160 and various credit cards — was gone.

Game theory

A 14th Street apartment was cleaned out of video games and a television set, which its residents were out, cops said.

It's unclear how the thief or thieves got into the apartment, which is between Third and Fourth Streets, but the left-over Sony Playstation games, a Dell computer and a Nextel phone. A neighbor told cops that the house was placed her handbag behind the counter.

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Unhappy visit

A Williamsburg man who visited a friend on Butler Street

on May 9 had his backpack stolen after accidentally leaving it on the friend's front stoop.

The man told cops that he doesn't leave his bag which is on the quiet block of Butler between Fourth Avenue and Queenbury Place, and forgot the backpack, which contained \$700.

The bag was stolen long before the man went back outside to head home, at around 6:25 pm. When the 26-year-old called his credit card companies, at least one told him the card had already been used.

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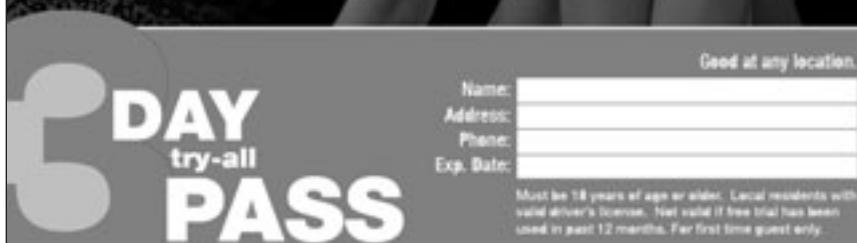
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PTAs to back Arabic school in Boerum Hill



The city will house its new Arabic language and culture school in this Dean Street high- and middle school building — despite anger from parents.

But parents say they feel dumped on

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

The two Parent-Teacher Associations at a Boerum Hill school, a former city police house, have an Arabic language and culture academy in its building, despite complaining that they had no say in the decision and wanted a mini-revolt from many parents when their plan was presented after the fact at an "emergency meeting" on Monday.

McMahon emphasized that the "skepticism" was not connected to the school's Arabic language or culture curriculum — which was partly introduced by teenagers with teenagers. Some critics also objected to the establishment of a public school devoted to Arabic culture.

The Boerum Hill decision sparked a similar sense of outrage.

"It's been a week,

and we still don't know how the transfer of the Gibran Academy from Park Slope to Boerum Hill

[they] can be convinced, the community could help make the program a success," said Michaela Mata, the vice-president of the middle school PTA, after the unprecedented Monday night meeting.

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The Boerum Hill decision

sparked a similar sense of outrage.

Lisa Gioe-Craig, the middle school principal, wrote to Schools Chancellor Joel Klein that "the issue is whether the school building can support an additional school, even given the fact it has been proposed."

Despite the uneasy detente between Department of Education and school principals, the school administration is still run high about how the Gibran Academy would be moving into this fall.

"There's some real skepticism

on the part of parents, but if

the city's decision came just days after the department shelved its initial PS 282 plan.

That school's PTA insisted that

it should have been consulted, that there was no room for an additional school, and that it was unique in its young audience with teenagers.

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on the part of parents, but if

the city vowed to put in writing that the Academy would stay no longer than three years and that longer-term negotiations to the school would be made.

Despite school leaders' conciliatory words, the presence of a dozen concerned parents in a haphazardly convened meeting did not assuage the fears of parents who were clearly angry.

Marcia Van Wagner, whose child is in fifth grade, said, "I'm really

angry that I didn't get to be involved in this process."

Soraj Murray, whose son is a student at the middle school, told Garth Hartman he was angry that the Department of Education's Office of New Schools, that the Boerum Hill building had "no room."

"You're interrupting the children's education already," she said, and her education.

Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott

tried to come to his assistance, telling the crowd that, "Our goal is to keep [the school] open."

Garth Hartman, who was one of the parents who attended the meeting, said, "Garth will have clearer, more concise answers after we do the [May 16] walk-through."

Parents were skeptical.

"None of the parents in the room trust between parents and the [Department of Education]," said Marcia Van Wagner, whose child is in fifth grade.

"They're a [Shoot first and ask questions later] strategy. What are the consequences if the things you put in writing don't happen?"

Gibran Academy founder and principal Debbie Almontaser attended the meeting and said she was not to blame for the controversy.

"I had no say [over location]," she said.

"The only thing I had a say in was that I'd like to be in Brooklyn. PS 282's reaction was valid.

In fact, she said, "I really would have felt the same way."

The Gibran Academy would

be the city's first dual-language school to focus on Arabic, according to the Department of Education, which said that the city already has 60 similar programs for languages ranging from Haitian Creole to Mandarin.

The city has said that Brooklyn is destined to be the home to a sizeable Arab community.

At Monday night's meeting, no school parents expressed objection to the move of the Gibran Academy, though two outsiders did complain noisily.

Summer Park resident Desiree Bernardo, who is worried about Islamic religious law and managed to raise Walcott's hackles.

"I find it unfortunate that this school is being singled out," said Walcott.

It is like dual-language schools that teach Korean. This school will be like any other New York City public high school, just to teach Arabic in an academy school. The issue is about space.

Parents were equally quick to dismiss the anti-Arab rhetoric. "Arabic doesn't represent us," said Karen Harvey, whose child is in sixth grade.

"The only issue is space."

Exclusive: Almontaser speaks!

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

First Park Slope parents, and then their Brooklyn counterparts, have been engaging in a seemingly epic — and nasty — struggle about the placement of an Arabic language and culture academy into an existing school building.

But amid all this shouting, one voice has largely absent: the Gibran International Arabic Academy Principal Debbie Almontaser (photo right).

Almontaser is a native of Yemen and a longtime veteran of the Brooklyn public school system, having worked at an elementary school teacher and diversity consultant.

This week, Almontaser spoke with The Brooklyn Paper about her school, her vision, and the ensuing backlash.

Q: This week, you attended a Boerum Hill PTA's "emergency" meeting about the city's latest plan to move your school, Gibran International Arabic Academy on Dean Street, to a former high school on the Arts on Dean Street. How did you feel about the parents' concern?

A: These parents are concerned that parents have a right to raise. I feel for them. I know how they feel in terms of being in this situation. I'm also in this predicament, in that my school is going to be placed in a building that is not suitable for two schools, and I won't have the luxury of space that ideally I would like to have or had envisioned when proposing this school to the [city]. But this is an opportunity, and we're going to take it, and we're determined to work collaboratively with the other principals to make it work.

Q: At the meeting, you said that you had no role in the decision about the school's location, except for your preference for Brooklyn. That said, did you expect the process of placing the school to be so difficult?



I've answered them. Deputy Mayor [Dennis] Walcott answered them. This is a public school providing a non-religious education for students who are interested in learning Arabic as a second language.

Q: What will the school's curriculum be like?

All of the [city's] core curriculum expectations [will be met]. Sixth graders will learn about the ancient world ... We will have reading and writing, math, science. What will be different [is that] we will have Arabic as a second language, and English as a first language ... With any foreign language you engage in, ... You need to learn the history, culture and the people in order to negotiate the language effectively and not just memorize.

Q: Could you give us an example of how Arabic history and culture will infuse the core curriculum?

In math, as you know, algebra originated from the Arab world. So, we'll look at the historic back-

ground of algebra, at the historic background of the Arabic numerals. The numbers we use today are Arabic numerals.

Q: How much of the instruction will be in Arabic?

A: The language of instruction will take place during our extended day from 3 to 5 p.m. ... Students are still required to take the Algebra Regents in order to graduate, so we're very serious about them developing this language.

Q: Why is it important for public-school students to have the option of learning Arabic?

A: At this time and age, it's so important for students in the United States to have one or two languages under their belt ... Right now, Arabic is one of the most important after languages in the world.

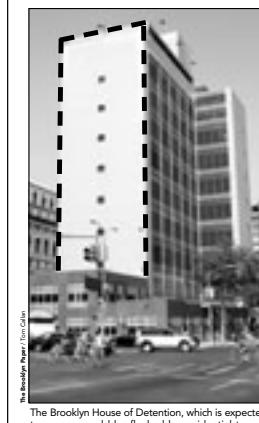
There are millions of dollars in federal funding that are available to education systems to teach Arabic. I saw it as a great investment opportunity ... to provide students [with] a perspective for the 21st century, [so they] can develop into globally oriented citizens, [so they] can learn about the world from many different lenses.

Q: What do you say to conservative critics like Daniel Pipes who called Arabic language instruction "inevitably laden with pan-Arabist and Is-

A: He studied the Arabic language as a Middle Eastern historian and he seems to have done really well with it still maintaining his roots and his identity. And I'm confident that we will continue to teach students Arabic as a second language and make sure they maintain their identity as he has.

Q: Do you expect to fill all 60 seats in your first grade class at Khalil Gibran, giving late in the year?

A: Absolutely, without a doubt. We had a Brooklyn middle school fair, and we had over 60 families [expressing interest].



The Brooklyn House of Detention, which is expected to reopen, could be flanked by residential towers (area inside dotted lines, above).

JAILHOUSES

Continued from page 1

to the rear of the existing Atlantic Avenue structure, with the mixed-use towers occupying city-owned land east and west of the jail that is now used for parking.

The request for proposals said the redesign must "ensure that jail staff and city personnel should not be able to view the new residential and/or commercial developments" — and vice-versa.

Shops will fill the ground floors of all three buildings, a nod to pressure from Borough President Mark-Viverito, who has lobbied the city to "knit" the Boerum Hill part of Cobble Hill back to the Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill side by adding in the pedestrian-friendly retail at the jail. The Beep cheered the city's call for residential development at the jail.

"I've always felt that with creative planning, this site can meet the needs of the city's Department of Correction while also meshing with the character of this thriving area," he said.

Markowitz said the jail-side apartments would do just fine on the open market. And no one can agree.

"People certainly have a reason to hold out [for apartments] ... They are buying even knowing that the jail could reopen," said Sue Wolfe, an Atlantic Avenue broker and the president of the Boerum Hill Association, which opposes the jail's reopening.

Jane Flavin, a special counsel for the DDC, said city officials would decide whether to put hotel rooms, apartments or offices in the towers based on the strength of the developers' proposals. She added that the city has not definitely decided that residential development must be part of the site, but said that whatever is built "must be compatible with the Department of Correction's plans" to reopen the jail.

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Drink this, Brooklyn!

Adam Goldstein (left in photo above) and partner Darin Siegfried, co-owners of the wine store Red, White and Bubbly, at 211 Fifth Ave. in Park Slope, celebrated the launch of Brooklyn's first wine label by partaking of a little red, by the way. The wine (admittedly made in California) was crafted from a recipe cooked up by Goldstein and Siegfried, who

wanted their wine to be high-quality, yet affordable "everyday" vino. And though it's bottled in the so-called Golden State, everything else — from the bold flavors to the bridge on the label to artist Ryan Seslow, who drew the logo — is Brooklyn.

— Christie Risk

Slope to the city—by bike



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By Harry Cheadle
for The Brooklyn Paper

Park Slope has more bike commuters than any other neighborhood in New York City — and more may be hitting the road soon thanks to new bike lanes, a new study revealed this week.

Virtually everyone who responded to the Department of City Planning's survey, which asked 95 percent of the city to build more bike lanes to improve safety for both riders and drivers,

"Cars refuse to share the road with bikers," one surveyee wrote. "They tail us, beep at us, speed by at very close distances, and ..."

Another respondent was more blunt: "I feel like I'm risking my life by riding my bike in NYC."

Help could be on the way. The borough is experiencing a mini-boom in bike lane construction. The Department of Transportation just last month added a lane on Willoughby Avenue in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, and is planning to go ahead with a much-debated bike lane along Ninth Street in Park Slope.

The Ninth Street bike lane makes sense given the study's central finding: most people commute by bike from Park Slope than from any other area in the city (see map). A part of the Upper West Side was second on the list.

More Brooklynites might commute by bike if there were more such lanes. According to the survey, the top reason non-commuting cyclists gave for not taking up cycling is as one might expect, the distance to work, but the behavior of drivers, the traffic and the danger of biking on narrow, bike-lane-free streets.

Statistics show that 225 New York City bikers died in crashes between 1996-2005 — but only one was in a marked bike lane.

"I won't ride a bike on Second Avenue," said Sheila, who works at On the Move, a Park Slope bike shop (she did not want to give her last name) and is a driver. "They don't want bikes on the road."

Sheila and many cyclists tell her about being hit by motorists who drive off without checking to see if the bike rider was okay.

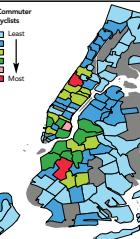
A sizable majority of cyclists said they take longer routes to avoid streets like Second Avenue.

But non-cyclists often resist the city's bike-lane enthusiasm.

Some Park Slope residents are protesting the Ninth Street plan, and last year, Community Board 2 voted down the Willoughby Avenue lane that was proposed.

One thing is clear from the survey: bikers believe that safety conditions need to improve. "It's everybody's problem," said Sheila. "The cyclist isn't going to kill a car. A car could potentially kill a cyclist."

A DOT spokesman said the agency was still reviewing the study, which was released as part of the Bloomberg Administration's promotion of Bike Month in May.



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Who saved Brooklyn? Many claim credit

By Mat Probasco
for The Brooklyn Paper

A few decades ago, Brooklyn's multi-million dollar brownstones were going for \$30,000. Prospect Park was a dirt lot. Prospect and Park Slopes had more than eight pizzerias but no restaurants.

So who gets credit for turning Brooklyn from a dirty word to a hot spot — politicians, developers, grassroots organizers or some other interest group?

On Saturday, community ac-

tivists from yesteryear met at Borough Hall to tally up the heroes and goats from Brooklyn's slow ascent to stardom from the 1970s to the '90s.

And most speakers — at least the ones who have to get re-elected — credited We, the People.

"We owe the citizenry a great deal of gratitude for what they did in the 1980s to make that happen," said Borough President James Dinkins and former Mayor David Dinkins and former Governor Mario Cuomo, both Delegates to the D-Park Slope Street by street, residents banded together to force banks

to issue loans within Brooklyn, despite its sometimes resemblance to a slum. They hoped to bring the middle class back from the wrecking ball, and direct cops to brutal criminals.

"You can't really talk about the rise in Brooklyn without the rise of the community against crime," said Bremer, who also praised former Mayor David Dinkins and former Governor Mario Cuomo, both Delegates to the D-Park Slope.

Street by street, residents banded together to force banks

to credit for safer streets.)

Even when crime was at its worst, John Muir was organizing the Prospect Park Environmental Council, which believed that saving the crime-ridden park would be key to revitalizing Brooklyn.

"She was the first to see that the park was important to the city," said Bremer. "She was dying," Muir said.

People were afraid to walk near the park for fear that muggers would leap from its ledges to the remodeled.

As New York's economy

changed from manufacturing to service and technology-based

much of Brooklyn was abandoned as a post-industrial wasteland, panelists at the symposium said.

"About a third of the shops on Seventh Avenue were boarded up," said Everett Ortner, who bought a brownstone in Park Slope in the early 1990s. "Over the next decade, capitol his friends to the same rather then flee to the suburbs."

Ortner, founder of the Brownstones Residential Committee, and others petitioned the Brooklyn Union Gas Company to buy old homes and restore them as showrooms. The com-

pany offered tours of homes renovated with new appliances, heating and cooling systems.

The plan to reuse eyesores from the past as well-known blocks.

In the meantime, Philip and Mary Gallagher picked banks that were unwilling to invest in

Brooklyn's future.

"The strategy was to fix two or three of the worst houses on about a dozen blocks [to] encourage other homeowners to fix up their own buildings," Philip Gallagher said.

Of course, the end result of all this hard work was renascence of a borough, a

Phoenix-like rise that is known around the world.

Now, perhaps, the only worry is that the newfound safe, clean borough will become victim of its own residents' success.

Brooklyn's desirability is encouraging more people to move here, bringing more people, more cars and some of the very urban ills that borough residents hoped were left behind.

The dense population in flux could give way to Manhattan-style residential density.

Love them or hate them, pro-

the new residential towers in Downtown Brooklyn are happening because developers think there is a market for the thousands of units of housing and tens of millions of square feet of office and retail space.

Many of the people who "want to live here" can't afford to live there anymore.

But Muir said there is a solution: responsible development that puts high-end along wide avenues while preserving smaller homes on the side streets.

"The trick is to save one while making room for the other," Muir said.

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Explosive bust for the 68

By Christie Risk
The Brooklyn Paper

Bay Ridge cops went undercover last week to sting a would-be fireworks entrepreneur — nabbing a Queens woman for attempting to sell pyrotechnic goods that is illegal in New York State.

Here's how it went down: Earlier this month, an officer from the 68th Precinct posted on Craigslist for tips on where he could buy fireworks.

On May 7, an Astoria resident wrote back, offering 20 high-power "Mortar Shell Cannons" and assinged "Roman Candles" for a low, low price of \$125, cops said.

The undercover officer met the woman at the intersection of 68th Street and 3rd Avenue and made the exchange. Ten minutes later, his backup swooped down and arrested the unsuspecting saleswoman, who identified herself as Christine Parmenter and charged her with "sale of fireworks," a misdemeanor.

Parmenter could not be reached for comment. However, judging by current Craig's List postings, her arrest may not be the last for "sale of fireworks" this year.

"Her [sic] next post will be another one poster (or, perhaps, another undercover cop). "[H]ave [S]\$250 to spend. Email me with info."



Parks commissioner Adrian Benepe (tall guy in center) and Councilman Vince Gentile (shorter guy without Viking hat) hang out with students from PS 69 after the groundbreaking for the new Leif Ericson playground.

A plunderer's paradise

By Matthew Lysiak
The Brooklyn Paper

Local explorer Leif Ericson was alive to see the new playground.

Leif Ericson Park, located between 66th and 67th Street on Eighth Avenue, will undergo a \$1.4-million renovation that would make any Viking proud.

The park's makeover will include new playground equipment with a Viking ship theme, new swings, a synthetic turf volleyball area, basketball half-courts, game tables, and benches, a picnic area with accessible seating, and lush perimeter gardens.

Officials got downright poetic at the prospect of a new park.

"Youngsters will delight in the new playground," said Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe on Tuesday at a groundbreaking.

(elated officials and Agency heads donned horned helmets for the occasion, and Swedish fish, Danish cookies, and Icelandic water were handed out to the kids.)

"Just as the park's namesake explored North America, children can make their own discoveries while playing in this state-of-the-art playground."

Indeed, the youngest Vikings are al-

ready looking forward to seeing the barren playground transformed into a plunderer's paradise.

"It could be really cool," said one young boy, though he quickly added a cynical aside. "Anything would be better than this, it's not fun."

All told, the rehab costs were financed by Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge). The park is named for Leif Ericson, the first millennium Viking best known as the first European to set foot on North America (he did it nearly 500 years before Columbus, that copycat).

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

May 19, 2007

Breaking the 'Rules'

New boro-based movie isn't even playing here! Who are these guys?

By Karen Butler
for The Brooklyn Paper

Rule number one: When a movie is called "Brooklyn Rules," it should be playing at movie theaters in Brooklyn.

Director Michael Corrente's new movie violates that one (it's currently only playing at just two theaters in Manhattan).

Rule number two: When making a movie with Brooklyn in the title, don't shoot it in Canada or some other unlikely location.

At least Corrente got that one right.

"I can't believe we're shooting in Canada," Corrente told GO Brooklyn. "Talk about not having credibility. They would crucify us!"

Shot in King's County and based on a script by Brooklyn-born, Emmy Award-winning "Seinfeld" scribe Terence Winter, the movie is about two guys who, if you didn't know it, get caught up with the Mafia.

While ambitious Michael (Freddie Prinze Jr.) hits the books and charms pretty co-ed Ellen (Mena Suvari) at Columbia University, skipper Peter Carrasco (Scott Caan) stays in the neighborhood and works for hot-headed mobster Caesar (Alec Baldwin). Sweetheart Bobby (Bensonhurst's Jerry Ferrara) plays a more stable life that includes his girlfriend and a job at the post office, but when

one of the guys unexpectedly killed the other he began questioning their choices.

Rehashing tired plotlines, no matter who's doing it, is definitely against the rules. The film covers friendship, loyalty, the desire for a better life beyond the neighborhood, and the search for justice and crime — all themes exhausted by other mob-oriented entertainment like the short-lived TV series "The Black Donnellys," and "The Departed" and "Alpha Dog."

Unfortunately, "Brooklyn Rules" covers



CINEMA

"Brooklyn Rules" is showing at AMC Empire 25 (234 W. 42nd St., at Eighth Avenue in Manhattan). For information, call (212) 939-0979.



No-so-good fellas: Freddie Prinze Jr., Jerry Ferrara and Scott Caan, at left, get local with director Michael Corrente, above, in the new film "Brooklyn Rules" which finds them playing Brooklyn boys who get caught up in the mob.

"Brooks Tale" and "Good Fella."

Well, maybe not — the film almost never saw the light of day. "Frankly, nobody wanted the movie," Corrente recalled, explaining how he fought for years to get the film a theatrical release. "Everybody wanted the DVD rights because there is no risk. That's what I wanted to do, where we are in independent filmmaking."

The cast, which did a fine job, is also proud of the film, which suffered a number of delays including the loss of original director Griffin Dunne.

"When I finally saw the film at the Tribeca Film Festival, I realized I had never been proud of a movie before," said Prinze, a former teen heartthrob, best known for his work in "Scary Movie" and "She's All That." "I was embarrassed for it. I wanted my whole life," he said. "I like [characters] with more edge, but I'm realistic in the fact that I'm not going to get many opportunities to do that."

Scott Caan, who played Baldwin's lackey, doesn't mind Prinze's image problem — he has a recurring role in the "Ocean's 11" franchise. "Filming in Brooklyn was great," he said. "Mike [Winter] knows the value of making a movie about somewhere and having it in that town. They were talking about that town in Canada and that was a huge turn-off."

— Karen Butler

Angry, absent Alec

It was the voicemail heard 'round the world: actor Alec Baldwin — who didn't show up to his "Brooklyn Rules" press junket — calling his 11-year-old daughter Ireland a "rude, thoughtless pig" when she missed a scheduled phone call.

Baldwin, 48, who was widely vilified, his "Brooklyn Rules" director and co-stars — all of whom have plenty of experience with bad parents — were eager to talk and lend support to their colleague.

"I think it's hard enough to be a parent, and to have it that public is just disgusting to me," said co-star Freddie Prinze, Jr., the son of actor Freddie Prinze, who committed suicide in 1977, one year after "Junior" was born.

On the set, "[Baldwin] was nothing but a professional," coed



Prinze. "I would work with that guy any day of the week and I would do anything he asked me to do."

Prinze co-star Scott Caan — son of actor James Caan and Sheila Ryan, the second of his four wives — also flagged his father's temper tantrum: "He made major mistakes," Caan told GO Brooklyn. "My father told me if I put my elbows on the table, he would stick a fork in my leg. You know what I mean? He never put the fork in my leg. It's not easy being a parent."

Director Michael Corrente chimed in with his own lesson: "My father once said, 'Michael, go ahead, hit your sister one more time and I will rip your arm off and beat you with the wet end. Now pass the salt.'"

We'd take Alec over that any day!

— Karen Butler

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DANCE

Let's dance

What's a birthday — especially a 30th — without a party? DanceAfrica doesn't want to know.

Beginning May 25, the group will celebrate with "DanceAfrica: Remember Home: Respect An African Dance Odyssey" at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. There's a whole lot more than just dance going on that weekend, though: the celebration will include film, sculpture, craft demonstrations,

"It's more than just sitting in your seat."

DanceAfrica Artistic Director Chacki Jackson said

GO Brooklyn. "It's a celebration. That's what I love about DanceAfrica. It's a community event that allows people from all over the world to come together to share in this hands-on performance."

"DanceAfrica: Remember Home: Respect An African Dance Odyssey" will be performed on May 25 at 7:30 pm and May 26 at 2 pm at the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House (30 Lafayette Ave., at Ashland Place in Fort Greene). Tickets are \$20-\$45. For information, call (718) 636-4100 or visit www.bam.org.

— Sarah McCormick

ART

Get 'Lucky'

For a city full of artists whose bedrooms double as studios, the 250-square-foot Lucky Gallery in Red Hook is a kindred spirit.

"I think it's really a great size," said Ed Rosko, the local artist who recently opened the gallery. "I personally like smaller works, which is what the gallery is best suited for."

The current exhibit, "A Lucky Find," features the works of Justin Waldstein (pictured) and David Wallace. Both artists have a background in graphic design, which is especially evident in Wallace's psychedelic, '50s pop-culture-influenced works.

The works start at \$500, but Rosko said he's in it for the love of art.

"At this point I'm not as concerned with making money as I am with displaying art." Sounds like you can make a purchase and still afford your own small spaces.

"A Lucky Find" is currently hanging at Lucky Gallery, 176 Richard St. at Wokou Street in Red Hook. An opening party will be held on May 25. For information, call (718) 852-9232. — John N. Barclay

EVENT

Torah-thon

Most students are familiar with pulling all-nighters during finals week — and students of the Torah are no different during Shavuot. A Jewish holiday celebrating the day when the Torah was given to the Israelites, it was declared a national holiday in 1956 by President Mt. Sinai. Shavuot is traditionally marked by staying up through the night to read the holy books.

This year's "Torah-thon" falls on Tuesday, May 22.

The explanation for the all-nighter sounds like a joke: "The morning that the Torah was given, they slept in," according to Rabbi Simcha Weinstein (pictured) of the Print Institute.

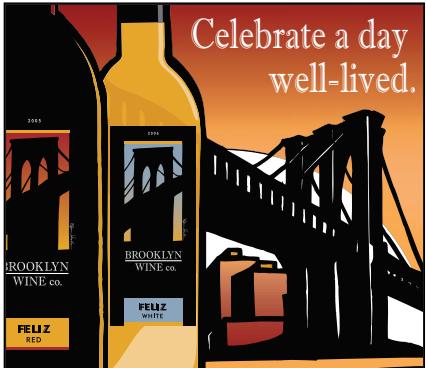
Not so fast: that Shavuot is as boring as posing over a textbook. "We make it fun," said Weinstein, who will be a guest speaker at Congregation B'nai Avraham's all-nighter.

Shavuot service begins at 7:45 pm; dairy dinner (\$30, plus children \$9 pm, Torah study at 11:30 pm). Congregation B'nai Avraham, 117 Rea St., between Henry and Clinton streets, Brooklyn Heights.

For dinner reservation, call (718) 596-4840 ext 18, or visit www.bnaiavrahambrooklynheights.com.

Service begins at 7:45 pm; dairy dinner (\$25, \$12 children at 7 pm) at Park Slope Congregation B'nai Jacob, 401 Ninth St., between Sixth and Seventh avenues. For dinner reservation, call (718) 832-1266. — Harry Cheadle

Photo: David Wallace



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May 19, 2007



Chic pea: Gamal Balkhoun, above, brings Middle Eastern tapas like his falafel plate, at left, to the Columbia Street Waterfront District with Mazzat.

The Brooklyn Paper photo by John S. Gandy

Turkish delights

Head to the waterfront for great meals at Mazzat

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Paper

While it may be at war in the Middle East, Brooklyn diners have no issues with its cuisine.

On Fifth Avenue in Park Slope, two Turkish eateries opened within weeks of one another, and Miriam, the Fifth Avenue caterer whose Raoul Ranches has her creative Israeli fair, has spawned a second outpost in Cobble Hill. The excellent Fez Restaurant, opened a year ago in Windsor Terrace, and in November, Gamal Balkhoun opened Mazzat on the Columbia Street Waterfront District.

Not far from mega-market Fairway, Balkhoun (who also owns two branches of Cafe Rakka in the East Village) has a former deli space that he transformed into an attractive, informal space. The only accouterments that signal a Middle Eastern eatery are the black-and-white photos of his homeland on the brick walls.

As a way of distinguishing his eatery from the rest of the Middle Eastern newcomers, Balkhoun refers to the restaurant as a "Mediterranean kit-

DINING

Mazzat (200 Columbia St., between Sackett and Union streets in the Columbia Street Waterfront District) accepts reservations and is open Sunday through Thursday, 5 p.m.-10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 5 p.m.-11 p.m. Entrées \$22-\$37. The restaurant serves lunch and dinner daily. Brunch is available Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Subway: F, G to Carroll Street. For information, call (718) 852-1652.

chen." Among the long list of "tapas" are a few dishes to support that description: chorizo and andouille sausages and feta cheese, and a combination of two, "Sancoche verte" (a cold, green mayonnaise-based sauce flavored with herbs) appears in one of the "specialties of the house." The rest of the plates don't have names.

After settling in the front room, we ordered wine from the affordable wine list — there's a satisfying Pinot Grigio for \$7 a glass, \$26 for the bottle — along with the over-wrought cocktails. Not long after, a platter of falafel recently so Mazzat's moist, crunchy and highly spiced version was appreciated. So were two dishes of Mediterranean origin: dates wrapped in bacon, and scallops prepared the same way. I loved the contrast of the sweet, crisp dates and the smoke of the grilled vegetable.

Later, the hummus smooth with a small puddle of good olive oil in its center; the baba ghanoush rich with the smoke of the grilled vegetable. The lamb kebab was a bit of a letdown, falafel recently so Mazzat's moist, crunchy and highly spiced version was appreciated. So were two dishes of Mediterranean origin: dates wrapped in bacon, and scallops prepared the same way. I loved the contrast of the sweet, crisp dates and the smoke of the grilled vegetable.

chopped olive oil. So simple — just the two ingredients playing off one another — and so enjoyable.

I was equally pleased with his entree, but my "Alexandria style" grilled sea bass elicited glares of envy. It was a beauty: an entire fish is skewered in a marinade made then light-cooked with whole wheat bread crumbs. It arrived crusty, nearly black and practically smoking. Beside the ebony knockout was a pile of "Egyptian rice," a long-grained rice mixed with chickpeas, wheat, and just-right here.

A chicken shish kebab was tender and smoky, though not as impressive as the lamb version. The grill charred the edges of the meat nicely and amplified the earthy aliveness but the pepper and mustard seeds that seasoned it.

Unlike the finales in some Middle Eastern cafés, where overly sweet, store-bought pastries are the rule, Balkhoun uses the baba ghanoush himself. The phyllo is crisp and redolent of fresh butter; the pistachio nuts retain their crunch and the sugar syrup he employs makes the little diamonds less cloying than those drenched with honey.

After a few sips of strong, dark Turkish coffee so thick it poured like mud from the little copper pot. The drink is bitter in the pleasant way espresso can be, with a touch of cardamom to round out any robust coffee. On a recent Saturday night, a few locals sat at the bar chatting with the welcoming Balkhoun. A couple of large tables were filled with families eating and chatting, reluctant to leave. I took a seat at a table near the entrance and the satisfied faces of my friends and I remembered that '60s saying, "Make love not war." It seemed fitting.

The Fabulous Fifth Avenue FAIR

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Team spirit

The real dish on Spirito, the hottest new plate in the Slope

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Paper

When two successful restaurateurs and a professional DJ wanted to open a neighborhood spot to serve the Italian food they love, there was only one thing missing: a chef.

America's newest Giovani, Cavaglia and Peperino Palazzo met 10 years ago when they were fathers of infants born about a month apart. The East Village dads became fast friends and, as years passed, their respective careers took off: Franzeese now runs a restaurant on the Hudson and worked as a DJ in clubs throughout the city; Cavaglia and Palazzo became restaurateurs: Cavaglia co-owned Gradiosa in the West Village, while Palazzo opened Grecos and Persepolis in the East Village.

While their kids played, the men tossed around the idea of joining forces and launching a spot that "didn't serve anything." After a few months, Franzeese told GO Brooklyn they imagined a place where diners could find the simple dishes that the men remembered from home.

"We're all from different regions of the country," said Franzeese. "I'm from

Naples; Giovani, our 'wine guy,' comes from Puglia. Luigi is from Sicily. We used to feed the wine, it was never bread."

Their talk was never more than until a long time friend, the Venice-born chef Claudio Cristofoli, showed an interest.

When Claudio came on board, that's when we started putting it together," he said.

Spirito Ristorante (287 Ninth St., between Avenue C and First Avenue) accepts American Express, Diners, MasterCard and Visa. Entrees: \$16-\$24. The restaurant opens Tuesday through Sunday, closing Monday. For information, call (718) 832-0085.

DINING

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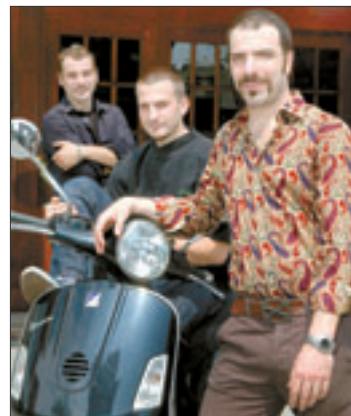
Frances said he wasn't worried. "The location seemed just right," he said.

Spirito opens in late April. "We wanted something small and cute," Franzeese said. The restaurant has a single dining area seats 35; the terrace 25; and when the garden in the back of the eatery opens next month, there will be room for 40 more. "It's cute," though, he said.

Spirito's chocolate-brown awning, with the eatery's name printed in gold, signals an elegant addition to the block. Glass through the long windows, open daily on a recent evening, into a dining room filled with tables and chairs, wooden tables and a rich mahogany bar, brick walls and modern glass chandeliers create a handsome setting.

Up a flight of stone stairs is a lovely room with a glass ceiling. On warm nights, the walls—made of plastic and fabric, can be rolled up creating an outdoor, sky-space.

"It was raining one night and it was gorgeous up there with the water running down the skyline," said Franzeese.



Italian stallions: Above from left, Mario Franzeese, Claudio Cristofoli and Giovanni Cavaglia, dreamed of serving dishes like grilled swordfish with red beets and balsamic sauce, at left, at Spirito, their new Italian bistro.

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Cristofoli's opening menu is an amalgamation of the dishes the partners longer for when they first imagined their eatery. From the chef's sea-bound region there is "Pasta Misto" and the dining area seats 35; the terrace 25; and when the garden in the back of the eatery opens next month, there will be room for 40 more. "It's cute," though, he said.

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He sounds like a native already.

whose brainstrom — presenting Victoria as Victor, a Polish count strolling as a woman in a male performance — takes the cabaret world by storm. John Blaylock's droll manner and lived-in face as Toddy provides a perfect foil to Christine Paterson's dulce voice and smitten smile as Victoria.

The real star in this production, though, is the company of acrobats and dancers that plays supporting roles as various Parisian types and moves with agility and zest while doing the splits and breaking chains in the taking-ways-and-taking-ways-of life slapsk fight scenes. Each actor's eyes are alive with enjoyment and a sense of fun caroming around Michael Kern's witty set in charming costumes by

Samantha Fromm.

Christopher St. Moscetti Smith and director Alan Schaefer should get the credit for the style and zing of the production, and for keeping the cast grounded in the reality of the relationships while providing endless invention in comedy and variety of behavior.

Standouts in this regard are Allison Guinn as a dippy gangster's moll and Patrick Field

as a deadpan bodyguard. They are the yin and yang of this production, creating comedy together and complementing the signature showstopper in song — "Tramp Me." "All you have to do for the dream to come true is go out there and be what you are, and we'll make you a world famous star!"

THEATER

"Victor/Victoria," will run at the Gallery Players (199 14th St., between Avenue A and B) through May 27. Tickets are \$18, \$14 for seniors and children under 12. For information, visit www.galleryplayers.com.

CORRECTION

In our May 5 edition, we incorrectly rendered the name of Winston Churchill's mother, Jenny Jerome. GO Brooklyn regrets the error.

It's no drag

Gallery Players' 'Victor' is victorious

By Christopher Murray
for The Brooklyn Paper

Victor/Victoria," the Blake Edwards film that starred Julie Andrews, Robert Preston and James Gardner, remains beloved for its cross-pollination of hoots and charming songs, changed with contemporary sexual politics and gender bending.

The musical version of the film is being presented with panache by the stalwart Gallery Players in its first New

York revival since the original Broadway ended almost 10 years ago. Oddly enough, the production reveals the show more as a celebration of friendship. The juice, abundantly provided here by a cast with ample energy and sometimes from a connection and conflict between pals.

Victoria Grant — an unployed chanteuse down and out in Paris — is transformed by her new best buddy, Toddy (a gay song-and-dance man),

I AM THE LIGHT
OF THE WORLD:
HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME
SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS,
BUT SHALL HAVE
THE LIGHT OF LIFE.

JOHN 3:12

United Pentecostal
Deliverance Temple

invites you to

I Am Your
Light
GOSPEL CRUSADE

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7:00 PM

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All are welcome

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TUESDAY MAY 22 DELUXE DAIRY DINNER 9PM ADULTS \$30, CHILDREN \$10 Hon. David G. Trager U.S. District Judge, E.D.N.Y. Masrah Principle in America Today * * * * *	WEDNESDAY MAY 23 Kids Free ICE CREAM PARTY Celebrate the countdown to the Ten Commandments! Wednesday at Noon 9:45 am Morning Services 10:45 am Reading of the 10 Commandments Followed by a Children's Ice Cream Party 8:00 pm Class in RavMba's Mishneh Torah 9:01 pm Candle lighting followed by Services & Guest Speaker
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THURSDAY MAY 24
Moshe Goldin
 Ancient Israel & Sinai: The case for the Authenticity of the wilderness tradition
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OUR OPINION

On board with bikes

The wheels are finally turning in favor of bicycle riders in the city — and every pedal-powered commuter has the Bloomberg Administration to thank.

In the past six months, the mayor's Office of Transportation — which for so long treated biking as the way to go for fun, not fitness — has become even more proactive in encouraging green commuting, going so far as to paint new bike lanes even in neighborhoods whose community boards had rejected them.

It happened to us, in Fort Greene, and is about to happen on Ninth Street in Park Slope, a bike-friendly area whose community board has oddly, stalled on a bike lane plan there.

Though the bicycle advocacy management team still asks local planning boards, we applaud the DOT's drive for bike safety. (It's not for nothing that our bike-commuting editor has a file in his computer labeled "My obit" — to be run in the event of his demise on the roads.)

The good news is that the statistics bear out the agency's aggressive push for more bike lanes.

In the decade from 1996 to 2005, 225 bike riders were killed in crashes on city streets — yet only one death occurred on a street with a bike lane. No wonder the agency plans to lay down 50 miles of new bike lanes every year from now until 2012.

A recent survey compiled by the Department of City Planning showed that virtually all pedal-pushers support more bike lanes — and that the majority of cyclists would like to work if only the roads were safer.

Encouraging bicycle commuting is a crucial part of the mayor's PlaNYC 2030 plan — the visionary strategy for dealing with an expected influx of one million more residents (and their cars) in just over two decades.

Judge Phillips is free

AFTER LAST WEEK'S QUEST viewpoint on the six-year odyssey of retired Judge John Phillips, our readers will no doubt be pleased to see our front page story that the re-

spected jurist has finally been freed.

But this story is not over yet. Phillips was declared mentally incompetent and committed to the care of court-appointed guardians in a process initiated by District Attorney Charles Hynes. The DA claimed he wanted to protect the aging judge — who once ran against him for the top prosecutor job — from those who could pilfer his multi-million-dollar estate.

That is exactly what happened anyway — yet Hynes has not brought charges against any of the people who were supposed to be protecting Phillips. Instead, his legal guardian Emani Taylor, who recently admitted that she took almost \$20,000 from the retired judge,

Many have questioned whether Hynes was really trying to protect Phillips or merely having his political rival taken out of the picture. To counter that impression, Hynes must move against the guard who ruined Phillips' life.

This case is not over.

ALL DRAWN OUT



Robert Hartung

LETTERS

Tolls on bridges do job of 'congestion pricing'

To the editor:

There is no "ambivalence" about my anger for congestion pricing, as suggested in your story, "Taking its toll" (April 28).

Brian Ketcham and I have been vociferous advocates of the idea since it made a key strategy of the 2005 campaign to elect Clean Air plan, which became federal law last year.

My comment to your reporter was that the mayor made such a strong and eloquent case for tolling that we should just pass and EZ-Pass should become big business.

Yes, \$8 is a bargain for all.

Caryn L. Johnson, Boerum Hill
The writer is the partner Brian Ketcham

are transportation consultants.

IKEA responds

To the editor:

Your recent story on retail development in Red Hook is just fine (Brooklyn Paper, March 4, 2007) but was not only factually inaccurate, but crossed an unfortunate line from reporting news to reporting rumors.

When contacted, IKEA responded that we make it perfectly clear that IKEA had already planned the development plans for the outparcels on our property at this time. We're not sure how much more definitive we could be. Indeed, the first attachment to me in response to your article could not have been clearer: "we are focused solely on building and opening our IKEA store and currently do not have plans underway for other parcels at that point in time. We will do so. We hope the Brooklyn Paper will strive for more accuracy as it attempts to do so well."

Joseph Roth, Coney Island, PA
Editor's note: As Roth pointed out, he was quoted accurately. Our reporter was not. Red Hook source told us — that IKEA will, at some point, expand its footprint over the "outparcels."

Simcha, times two

To the editor:

As a homeowner and owner of a 16-unit

MORE ONLINE

BROOKLYNPAPER.COM



Readers sound off on a plan to put an Arabic school inside a public school in Boerum Hill.

building, I think I have the right to say that you cannot throw my litter on my property ("Law would destroy livelihood," The Brooklyn Angle, May 5).

Councilman Simcha Felder's bill would allow building owners to block yards and other areas of their property from your neighbor on my stoop. Your columnists said, "But what about renters who live in a 40-unit building?" Suppose their building owner puts up one of those signs? Then what? Because the building owner is tired of cleaning up circulars doesn't mean that residents should be denied their right to consume legitimate advertising or news?

Oh, yeah, that's the answer is very simple: FEE-A-FEE-A-FEE-A-MAIL YOUR PAPER TO THEM! There is no First Amendment issue here.

J.J., neighborhood withheld

Editor's note: J.J. is a pseudonym. Gersh Kastavon raised a valid concern by this letter. Under Felder's bill, building owners would be given the right to ban tenants from receiving many different types of commercial printed goods.

To the editor:

Felder isn't thinking this through properly. The fault is not the occasional litterer.

It's the overzealous Sanitation Department.

Why do they harass people with tickets

for a small piece of paper? Don't they realize that, in New York City, no one can control every piece of paper?

Felder should tell the Sanitation Depart-

ment to call off the dogs — and if that doesn't work, he should visit Mayor Bloomberg.

One other thought: What if one of

Felder's new "no solicitation" signs are

found littering his mother's front yard?

Would who get a ticket in that case?

Name withheld, Borough Park

Delivery Opt out

Every week, we deliver copies of The Brooklyn Paper to homes throughout Brooklyn. Our unique system delivers to just a few papers per building (eliminating the kind of clutter seen by circular and menu delivery services).

We hope everyone appreciates our free home delivery, but realize there are alternatives available.

So, if you've received The Paper at home and no longer want this free service, you may "opt out" of our delivery program by filling out the online form at BrooklynPaper.com/html/about/optout.htm.

Colton bagged

To the editor:

Assessment William Colton would like his plastic bags again and perhaps it is released into our waters when bags decompose ("Pol says ban bags," April 14).

What about heavy-duty trash bags and all of our other plastic?

I bring several canvas bags to the supermarket to reduce plastic bag usage.

Cashiers are often surprised, but happy that I'm helping to pack. Others have scoffed, saying my effort won't help.

I am not the only ones who feel uncomfortable by my waste actions to reduce waste.

I do not preach when I shop. I try to keep it personal (so others won't feel judged) by saying my effort won't help.

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Suit: Ratner is one bad liar

By Gersh Kuntzman

The Brooklyn Paper

Bruce Ratner is a money-grubbing liar who tricked a well-connected group of New York investors — 90 percent of his own money — to help Ratner acquire the New Jersey Nets, but promises that he “never had any intention of fulfilling,” a bombshell lawsuit charge, last week.

Eugene Greene contributed the hefty sum — and rounded up another \$225 million from other investors — to help Ratner buy the Nets in 2004, but now claims he was hoodwinked. Ratner responded to his suit by telling the paper, “the glue that helps run this team.”

Ratner made “repeated promises and a series of overt misstatements and quibbles to Greene,” according to the businessman’s lawsuit, which was filed last week in Manhattan Supreme Court,

and seeks \$20 million in compensatory damages and \$10 million in punitive damages.

Ratner, said Greene, “never had any intention of fulfilling” the promises, which included making Greene a member of the Nets’ Board of Directors.

“He would constantly ‘intend’ to do things, but never followed through on his promises to make Greene ‘the glue that helps run this team.’

Ratner made “repeated promises and a series of overt misstatements and quibbles to Greene,” according to the businessman’s lawsuit, which was filed last week in Manhattan Supreme Court,

and seeks \$20 million in compensatory damages and \$10 million in punitive damages.

Ratner did not wish to comment for this article.

But his court papers speak for them: Ratner stiffed Greene out of his management fee, which was to be eight percent of the total amount raised, and he “breached the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing,” the papers said.

Greene, who describes himself as “a highly experienced and successful businessman and entrepreneur,” sought help from other executives at Ratner’s company, but “executives admitted to Ratner . . . that he had been ‘f—d’ by Ratner.”

One Ratner executive named in the court papers, FCR General Counsel

and seeks \$20 million in compensatory damages and \$10 million in punitive damages.

Sadie Mitnick, told Greene that “she knew Ratner had taken care of all of his efforts . . . and that Ratner had never promised him all of the things that he had.”

The Brooklyn Paper

Mitnick said she didn’t want to comment on the suit because she was on vacation. She promised to speak to a reporter next week.

Greene’s court papers paint a decidedly different picture of Bruce Ratner’s official bio (which calls him “the foremost developer in the country”) and the New York metropolitan area, and reflect on his service in the Lindsay and Koch administrations before becoming a reporter next week.

Greene describes Ratner as a man

“desperately seeking to raise money” during his quest to buy the Nets in 2003,

a man who had no qualms about “faking [his] way into” of Greene’s access to being involved in the deal.

By the end of the 17-page court document, the prevailing image of Ratner is one of a money-hungry user who makes promises, yet doesn’t deliver.

Greene, “constantly pressurized by Ratner . . . to continue his fundraising efforts,” the documents say. Ratner “continuously urged Greene, ‘We need more money, money, and more money,’ and you need to get it for us.”

As a result, Greene engaged in “round-the-clock efforts to raise more capital for Ratner.” He expected to be compensated for his efforts, “but was not compensated at all,” the papers charge.

He put a \$20-million price tag on his direct ditches and asked the court to add it to Ratner with a \$10-million punitive charge.

ARENA BAGELS...

Continued from page 1

This week, Atlantic Yards opponents were pleased that they beaten the bagel man into submission. But the whole story shows that the neighborhood is against Atlantic Yards,” said Jon Cohn, one of the people who expressed his displeasure to Aggarwal.

By carrying so much weight, Aggarwal chose a different approach to dealing with the arena foes. Last year, when some opponents proposed to ban products of Brooklyn Brewery products after company owner Steve Hindy expressed support for Atlantic Yards, Hindy stuck to his taps.

That misguided boycott fizz-

zed like old-beer.

But it remains appalling that hard-working men like Aggarwal and Hindy have to face such opposition.

Indeed, as support for Ratner’s project goes, Aggarwal’s decision to name his store “Arena Bagels” pales by comparison to the wheel-peeling of the Borough President. If Atlantic Yards is ever built, blam George Pataki, Mike Bloomberg and Mayor Markowitz, not Ratner.

And if his bagels aren’t good enough, go to Bergen Bagels a few blocks away.

But don’t worry, Ravi Aggarwal, the son of Bruce Ratner’s sis. Besides, you’d be missing out on a good bagel.

“And my bagels are even better, if I do say so,” Aggarwal said.

If Ravi Aggarwal has to spend another \$1,000 on a sign so that the word “arena” won’t hang near the soon-to-be-built arena, these people couldn’t care less.

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